

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PRS-01 H-02
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L-03 ACDA-10 CU-04 EB-08 /119 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. BROWN (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MR. CULLUMS
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY

-----082040Z 130443 /56

O 081730Z APR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR
DOD
CIA
NSA

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - APRIL 7

1.
FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR APRIL 7,
1977:

Q. PRESIDENT SADAT SAID YESTERDAY THAT HE HAD SUGGESTED
THAT SECRETARY VANCE SHOULD HEAD WHAT HE CALLED A "TASK
FORCE" TO DEAL WITH THE MIDDLE EAST AFTER THE SERIES OF
VISITS HERE OF OTHER ARAB LEADERS. CAN YOU GIVE US ANY
DETAILS ABOUT THIS SUGGESTION, AND HOW DO YOU VIEW IT?
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A. I HAVE NO DETAILS ON THE SUGGESTION. I THINK THAT THE
WHITE HOUSE HAD TWO VERY EXTENSIVE BRIEFINGS IN THE LAST
TWO DAYS ON PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT. OUR INTEREST IN A
SOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS WELL KNOWN, AND WHERE
WE WILL BE GOING AND HOW WE WILL BE ACTING IS A MATTER
YET TO BE DECIDED. WE ARE STILL IN ACTIVE CONSULTATION AND
HAVE A NUMBER, AS YOU KNOW, OF MORE VISITS COMING OF
MIDDLE EASTERN LEADERS.

Q. WHEN IS KING HUSSEIN COMING -- EXACTLY?

A. THE EXACT DATES OF THAT I DO NOT HAVE. IT IS,
HOWEVER, AS I RECALL, IN LATE APRIL.

Q. HODDING, NOW THAT THE SADAT MEETING IS OVER, CAN
YOU MAKE AN ASSESSMENT ON WHETHER THE TALKS MOVED THE
MIDDLE EAST SITUATION FORWARD? DID THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT
GIVE ANY INDICATION OF ANY MODERATION OR COMPROMISE OR
ANY OTHER SIGNS THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE THE UNITED STATES TO
THINK THAT A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT IS CLOSER?

A. AGAIN REFERRING TO THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN
TUESDAY, JODY LABELED THE TALKS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENTS
AS HAVING BEEN FRIENDLY AND COMPREHENSIVE AND PRODUCTIVE;

AND WE THINK THAT THE THRUST OF WHAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAD TO SAY IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY REINFORCED THAT ASSESSMENT.

Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN? JUST FOCUS ON THE "PRODUCTIVE," SINCE THE OTHERS ARE VERBIAGE, BUT --

A. WELL, THEY WENT, OF COURSE, ACROSS THE ENTIRE RANGE OF ISSUES WHICH WERE MENTIONED BOTH IN THE BRIEFINGS AND BY PRESIDENT SADAT. THE UNITED STATES IS NOT PUTTING FORTH ANY FINAL POSITIONS. WE ARE, OF COURSE, STILL UNCLASSIFIED

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LISTENING AND TALKING AND EXCHANGING IDEAS.

Q. WELL, COULD YOU DEFINE "PRODUCTIVE" A LITTLE MORE CLOSELY THEN?

A. "PRODUCTIVE" WOULD MEAN THAT THE EXCHANGE LED TO A MUCH CLEARER UNDERSTANDING ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ISSUES AND THAT SOME VERY USEFUL VIEWS WERE EXCHANGED.

I DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO GO INTO ITEM BY ITEM. I THINK, PROPERLY, THAT'S A WHITE HOUSE MATTER; AND IN VIEW OF THE VERY EXTENSIVE BRIEFINGS OVER THERE, I THINK I'LL REFER YOU TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

Q. WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE PRESIDENT SADAT'S REPLIES TO BARBARA WALTERS LAST NIGHT ABOUT "THE ESSENCE OF PEACE IS PRODUCTIVE"?

A. I DON'T HAVE A TEXT ON THAT, AND I'D RATHER NOT TRY TO CHARACTERIZE WHAT I DON'T HAVE.

Q. THERE IS NO TASK FORCE THEN HEADED BY SECRETARY VANCE TO DATE WITH THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. I HAVE NOTHING ON A TASK FORCE HEADED BY SECRETARY VANCE.

Q. HODDING, HAS THE SECRETARY BRIEFED HUAN JON, THE HEAD OF THE CHINESE LIAISON OFFICE, ON HIS TALKS IN MOSCOW?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. HODDING, BACK TO THE DOBRYNIN MEETING, ASSUMING THAT THEY TALKED ABOUT ARMS CONTROL WAS THIS THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE SECRETARY HAS RETURNED THAT RANKING UNCLASSIFIED

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AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAD TALKED TO THE SOVIETS ABOUT IT?

A. I DON'T KNOW.

Q. COULD YOU CHECK?

A. I'LL CHECK. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'LL GET AN ANSWER.

Q. DID YOU NOT CONFIRM EARLIER ON THAT ARMS CONTROL WAS ONE OF THE TOPICS DISCUSSED?

A. I SAID THAT IT WOULD BE LOGICAL TO ASSUME THAT ARMS CONTROL WOULD BE ON THE AGENDA, BUT THAT I WASN'T GOING TO GO DOWN THE LIST OF WHAT WAS OR WASN'T ON THERE.

Q. WHAT ELSE WAS ON THE AGENDA?

A. I'M NOT GOING TO GO INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT WAS THERE.

Q. DID THE MIDDLE EAST GET DISCUSSED?

A. I CAN'T GO INTO THE SUBSTANCE OF WHAT WAS DISCUSSED.

Q. WELL, THE MIDDLE EAST WAS THE SPECIFIC TOPIC IN THE COMMUNIQUE.

A. IN THE COMMUNIQUE, I UNDERSTAND THAT -- AND OTHER ISSUES, AS THE COMMUNIQUE SAID. AND THERE ARE A NUMBER OF ISSUES WHICH ARE UP FOR DISCUSSION FROM WORKING GROUPS TO GENEVA.

Q. HAS A DATE YET BEEN SET FOR THE MAY MEETING IN GENEVA?

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A. I DON'T HAVE A DATE SET FOR THAT.

Q. THAT'S NOT WHAT HE ASKED THOUGH.

A. I UNDERSTAND THAT, AND WHAT I'M SAYING IS I DON'T HAVE A DATE, IF IT HAS BEEN SET.

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING NEW ABOUT SOUTHERN LEBANON? IS THERE ANY BREAKTHROUGH IN YOUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A STABILIZATION OF THE SITUATION THERE?

A. WITHOUT GOING INTO THE GUIDANCE, LET ME SAY THE SITUATION REMAINS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME FROM OUR POINT OF

VIEW.

Q. ARE YOU MAKING ANY EFFORT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

A. WELL, I'LL GO TO THE GUIDANCE. OUR EFFORTS ARE AS THEY HAVE BEEN -- AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL PARTIES CONCERNED ARE FULLY INFORMED OF THE SITUATION AND TO ATTEMPT, IN ANY WAY WE CAN, TO PASS INFORMATION ALONG THAT LINE TO THE INTERESTED PARTIES.

Q. AND HAVE YOU BEEN ASKED ABOUT PASSING THAT INFORMATION, SPECIFICALLY?

A. I HAVE NOTHING ON THAT.

Q. YESTERDAY THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT SAW THE PRESIDENT. WAS THERE NOTHING OUT OF THAT THAT WOULD ENLIGHTEN US A LITTLE BIT ON THE SITUATION?

A. ON THAT, BARRIE, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE TO SAY. I DON'T HAVE ANY REPORT ON IT.

Q. HODDING, I ASKED YOU YESTERDAY AND -- COULD YOU UNCLASSIFIED

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SPECIFY WHO THE PARTIES ARE?

A. THE PARTIES?

Q. YES.

A. ALL INTERESTED PARTIES IN THAT AREA.

Q. INCLUDING THE PALESTINIANS?

A. I MEAN SO FAR AS DIRECT DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PLO, THE PALESTINIANS.

Q. RIGHT. BUT IN TERMS OF SOUTHERN LEBANON WHERE YOU'RE IN TOUCH WITH ALL OF THE PARTIES, WHICH PARTIES ARE YOU REFERRING TO?

A. I'M REFERRING TO THE VARIOUS GROUPINGS OF LEFTISTS, RIGHTISTS, GOVERNMENT, SYRIANS AND THE LIKE.

Q. SO THAT ONE COULD INFER FROM WHAT YOU'RE SAYING THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOW IN TOUCH WITH THE PALESTINIANS AS WELL SINCE THEY'RE NOT THE FIGHTING FORCES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON.

A. I WOULDN'T IMPLY, AND WHAT YOU INFER I GUESS IS WHAT YOU HAVE TO INFER. I DON'T MEAN YOU.

Q. BUT I MEAN YOU'RE --

A. I'M NOT IMPLYING IT.

Q. YOU DON'T MEAN TO IMPLY THAT?

A. I DO NOT MEAN TO IMPLY ANYTHING.

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Q. WELL THEN, COULD YOU GIVE US A DIRECT ANSWER TO THE QUESTION WHICH PARTIES ARE GOING TO BE CONSULTED HERE?

A. NO. I CAN'T GIVE YOU A DIRECT ANSWER INsofar AS ITEMIZING ALL THE PARTIES THAT HAVE BEEN CONSULTED.

Q. BUT IF WE DON'T IMPLY THAT THE PALESTINIANS ARE ONE OF THE PARTIES, THEN I'M A LITTLE LOST AS TO JUST WHAT IT IS THAT YOU'RE SAYING. BECAUSE YOU ARE SAYING ALL THE PARTIES. YOU'RE SAYING ALL OF THE PARTIES AND THEY'RE DOING SOME OF THE FIGHTING.

A. ALL RIGHT. I DON'T WANT US TO GET INVOLVED HERE BEYOND WHAT I WILL NOW READ AS GUIDANCE AS OPPOSED TO THIS.

WE ARE IN THE SAME POSITION AS WE HAVE BEEN, MARVIN, FOR SOME MONTHS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON; AND OUR DISCUSSIONS ARE GOING ON WITH THE SAME PEOPLE WE'VE BEEN TALKING TO FOR THOSE SEVERAL MONTHS.

A. I THINK OUR POSITION ON THAT IS WELL KNOWN.

Q. I MEANT THE PRESIDENT OF LEBANON, NOT THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

A. I'M SORRY. GIVE ME THE QUESTION AGAIN.

Q. THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON SAW PRESIDENT SARKIS.

A. I'M SORRY. OUR AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON SEES A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE COURSE OF HIS REGULAR DUTIES AND HIS DAILY AGENDA IS VERY FULL, AND THAT WOULD BE JUST SIMPLY PART OF THIS NORMAL PROCESS.

Q. YESTERDAY, HODDING, YOU SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION
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SUPPORTS OR STILL STANDS BY EARLIER ASSESSMENTS ABOUT

SYRIA'S HELPFUL ROLE IN LEBANON; AND THERE ARE CONSTANT AND INCREASING REPORTS OF SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN FORCES FIGHTING IN SOUTHERN LEBANON -- INCLUDING FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE WITH THEM, IN SOME CASES. DO YOU STILL HOLD BY THE ASSESSMENT THAT THE SYRIANS ARE PLAYING A HELPFUL ROLE?

A. YES, I DO.

Q. -- IN SETTLING THE CONFLICT.

A. YES, I DO. INSOFAR AS THE REPORTS GO, WE HAVE SEEN THE REPORTS IN. WE HAVE NOTHING ON THAT.

Q. COULD YOU DETAIL THE HELPFUL ROLE THAT THE SYRIANS ARE PLAYING AT THIS TIME?

A. I CAN'T AT THIS TIME. I CAN'T DETAIL THE PLAN.

Q. OR PERHAPS YOU COULD FIND SOMEONE WHO WOULD, OR GET SOME GUIDANCE THAT WOULD GIVE SOME DETAIL. IT CERTAINLY WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE SITUATION.

A. KEN, I THINK THAT I AM GOING TO HAVE TO STAND ON THE GENERAL STATEMENT THAT THEY HAVE BEEN. IF ANYTHING ELSE IS AVAILABLE, I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU.

Q. HODDING, YOU SAID JUST A MOMENT AGO THAT THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES VIS-A-VIS THE PALESTINIANS -- AND I THINK THE CONTEXT WAS SOUTHERN LEBANON -- WAS WELL KNOWN.

Q. ARE YOU IN CONTACT WITH ANY PARTY OTHER THAN THE GOVERNMENT?

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A. WE ARE DISCUSSING WITH A NUMBER OF INTERESTED PARTIES -- THOSE WHO ARE IN GOVERNMENT -- AND, AFTER ALL, THE SYRIANS ARE NOT IN GOVERNMENT -- AND OTHERS.

Q. BUT THEY HAVE A GOVERNMENT. I MEAN THERE IS A SYRIAN GOVERNMENT, A LEBANESE GOVERNMENT -- THAT'S FIGHTING THERE?

A. THAT'S CORRECT. AND IN THE NORMAL DIPLOMATIC DISCOURSE OF ANY AMERICAN MISSION, WE DISCUSS WITH A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN GOVERNMENT AND WE TALK TO THEM; AND THIS WOULD LOGICALLY BE THE CASE ALSO.

Q. IS THERE ANY CONTACT BETWEEN UNITED STATES OFFICIALS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ANY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PLO

OR OTHER PALESTINIAN GROUPS?

A. KEN, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT AT ALL.

Q. YOU CAN'T SAY "NO"?

A. NO, NO. WHAT I'M SAYING IS I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT AT ALL.

Q. WOULD YOU CHECK THAT?

A. SURE. IT MEANS I WILL CHECK THAT -- IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION.

Q. IN WHAT WAY ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH THESE VARIOUS GROUPINGS -- WITH THE LEFTISTS, MUSLIMS, PALESTINIAN GROUPING?

A. I DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO GO BEYOND WHAT I SAID.

2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WAS POSTED IN THE DEPARTMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESS OFFICE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS TAKEN AT THE BRIEFING:

Q. IS THERE A CONTACT IN THE MIDDLE EAST BETWEEN U.S. OFFICIALS AND THE PLO OR OTHER PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS?

A. NO.

Q. WHAT IS THE AMERICAN POSITION ON THE PLO? HAS IT CHANGED?

A. --THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT POSITION ON THE PLO REMAINS UNCHANGED: WE DO NOT SEE HOW THE PLO CAN JOIN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS SO LONG AS IT REFUSES TO ACCEPT THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO EXIST AND SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 WHICH CONSTITUTE THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

--WE BELIEVE THAT IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS THEMSELVES MUST DECIDE HOW THEY WANT TO SOLVE THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND THEN, SECONDLY, THESE COUNTRIES MUST NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION WITH ISRAEL.

3. FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM ABC TV EVENING NEWS APRIL 6 TEXT OF AN INTERVIEW PRESIDENT SADAT GAVE TO BARBARA WALTERS:

SADAT: I AM FOR FULL PEACE. BUT NOT THE INTERPRETATION

OF ISRAEL FOR FULL PEACE. MY DEFINITION OF PEACE IS THIS:
LET US END THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY. LET ISRAEL HAVE
WHATEVER GUARANTEES SHE ASKS FOR FROM WHATEVER BODY SHE
AGREES TO. WE SHALL NOT OPPOSE EVEN TO THE EXTENT OF A
DEFENSE PACT WITH THE UNITED STATES. WE SHALL NOT
OPPOSE THIS.

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WALTERS: THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT, MR. PRESIDENT, BECAUSE
PRESIDENT CARTER, WHEN TALKING ABOUT FULL PEACE, SEEMED
TO BE SPEAKING OF THE SAME KIND OF PEACE AS ISRAEL DID.
WHAT ABOUT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, EXCHANGE OF STUDENTS,
EXCHANGE OF TOURISTS, EXCHANGE OF JOURNALISTS? WOULD THAT
BE PART OF THIS PEACE?

SADAT: THIS IS NOT AT ALL, I MEAN, AN ARGUMENT ABOUT
FULL PEACE. AS I TOLD YOU, IT IS IMPOSING CONDITIONS,
THE OLD ISRAELI CONDITIONS THAT THEY COULDN'T IMPOSE EVEN
AFTER '56 OR AFTER THEIR VERY GLORIOUS VICTORY IN '67.
THEY COULDN'T IMPOSE THESE CONDITIONS ON US.

WALTERS: MR. PRESIDENT, IN A PRESS CONFERENCE YOU TALKED
ABOUT NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS --

SADAT: QUITE RIGHT.

WALTERS: -- AND IT MAY VERY WELL BE INTERPRETED THAT
BY NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS YOU MEAN FULL DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS, EXCHANGE OF STUDENTS, ET CETERA.

SADAT: FOR ME MYSELF, FOR MY PART, I HAVE NO OBJECTION
AT ALL. BUT LET US BE PRACTICAL. THE CLIMATE IS NOT
READY.

WALTERS: BUT YOU SAID AFTER GENEVA IT WOULD, AND THEN
CAME UP THE QUESTION, MR. PRESIDENT, ARE YOU TALKING
ABOUT FULL NORMALIZATION, AND YOU SAID YOU WERE.

SADAT: YES, FOR SURE. WHEN I SAY FULL NORMALIZATION IT
MEANS THAT THE STATE OF BELLIGERENCY THAT HAS PREVAILED
SINCE THE CREATION OF ISRAEL FOR TWENTY-NINE YEARS UNTIL
THIS MOMENT WE END.

WALTERS: MR. PRESIDENT, WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP?

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SADAT: THE NEXT STEP. A TASK FORCE HEADED BY
SECRETARY VANCE. THEN CONTACT ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED.
AND THE CO-CHAIRMAN, THE SOVIET UNION WHO IS CO-CHAIRMAN

ALSO WITH THE UNITED STATES OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE,
AND CONTINUE TO MAKE THE ESSENTIAL PREPARATIONS FOR
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

WALTERS: MR. PRESIDENT, YOU HAD NOT MET PRESIDENT CARTER
BEFORE THIS VISIT. BUT I UNDERSTAND THAT AFTER YOUR
MONDAY NIGHT WITH THE PRESIDENT, YOU SAID TO ONE OF
PRESIDENT CARTER'S AIDES, I LOVE YOUR PRESIDENT. DID
YOU SAY THAT? IS THAT THE WAY YOU FEEL?

SADAT: QUITE RIGHT.

WALTERS: YES?

SADAT: QUITE RIGHT. I MUST TELL YOU QUITE FRANKLY,
AFTER OUR FIRST DISCUSSION AND THE SECOND PRIVATE ONE
BETWEEN ME AND HIM ONLY FOR ONE AND A HALF HOURS, THE
MAN HAS GONE STRAIGHT TO MY HEART. I ADMIRE HIM. REALLY.

WALTERS: YOU HAD CALLED HENRY KISSINGER YOUR BROTHER. DO
YOU FEEL THAT JIMMY CARTER IS YOUR BROTHER?

SADAT: QUITE RIGHT.

WALTERS: THE SAME RELATIONSHIP, AS CLOSE AS YOU HAD WITH
HENRY KISSINGER --

SADAT: EXACTLY, EXACTLY.

WALTERS: -- YOU NOW FIND WITH THIS PRESIDENT?

SADAT: YES. YES, AND HE KNOWS THIS. I TOLD HIM THIS.
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VANCE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

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DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR APRIL 7, 1977:
TAGS: PFOR, XF
To: AMMAN BEIRUT MULTIPLE
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vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/de243e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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